

## Remarks at a Reception for Hillary Clinton in Flushing, New York October 23, 2000

Thank you very much, my long-time friend Tom Manton. You know, the story he told you was true. I was in Manhattan. They said, "We're going to the Queens Democratic Party. Congressman Manton is the chairman of the county party. If you do really well, they might endorse you." I said, "Well, what happens if they don't?" He said, "You'll lose Queens in the primary." [Laughter] "And we're going on the subway, and a television camera is going to follow you on the subway because they don't think anyone from Arkansas knows what a subway is." [Laughter]

So properly intimidated, I haul myself onto the subway. And it was fascinating, because no one in New York knew who I was, and yet, here is this camera with this bright light filming my every move. And all these people are dead-tired, and they're being elbowed around by this energetic camera person. They probably thought I was some—you know, in the precursor to "Survivor" or something—[laughter]—just some anonymous guy trying to make it out of Queens, on the subway, with a funny accent. It was funny.

So I was really apprehensive. We got to the meeting site, and I walked up the stairs, and the county committee clapped, and I walked down the middle of the aisle, not having a clue about what was going to happen. And this African-American guy who was taller than me leaned over and put his arm around me and said, "Bill, don't worry. I was born in Hope, Arkansas, too. Everything is going to be fine here." [Laughter] And I thought, "Only in New York. This is great." [Laughter]

So thank you, Tom Manton, for being my friend, for helping me get off to a good start as President. I wish your successor, Joe Crowley, could be here tonight, but he and Kasey had a baby girl today, and we're really happy for them, and that's why they're not here. I always say, the Democratic Party has to be pro-work and pro-family. So tonight is Joe's pro-family night. I think we can give him an excused absence.

I want to thank the other Representatives who are here: Gary Ackerman, who was with me last night; and Greg Meeks; Anthony Weiner.

I thank them for their leadership in the Congress. I thank them for their support of Hillary. I thank them for what they do for New York every day.

You know, when things go well, the President gets a lot of credit. But the truth is that over and above the American people, who deserve the lion's share of credit for every good thing that happens in this country, so much of what I have done would not have been possible if it hadn't been for the support of the Democrats in Congress. And that became even more true after we were in the minority. So I want you to know that these men have my undying loyalty and gratitude, because they have been wonderful to me, along with Senator Schumer and the other Democrats in the delegation.

I want to thank Alan Hevesi for being here, and your borough president, Claire Shulman, my long-time friend. Michael Reich, thank you for the work you do for the Democratic Party. And Alisa, you are great. You're going a long way. That was a great national anthem. And I want to thank Brian McLaughlin for making me feel welcome and being so kind to Hillary over these years and this last year of hard campaigning.

I was thinking about how I was introduced to Queens, by having this guy who was born in the same State I was, welcome me. And then I was thinking about all the times I've spent in Queens since then. I went to a Greek diner not very far from here a couple of times. I had a wonderful time in—I bet a lot of you have eaten there. Today I spent an hour and a half in the Jackson Hole Diner, near LaGuardia. I broke all my caloric rules. [Laughter]

While I was there, the guy that owns it—who grew up a block from the diner—but his manager is Vietnamese, and his mother still lives in Saigon. While I was there, I met this African-American guy and his wonderful young son named Miles, who asked me more questions about the White House than I could answer, so finally I just gave him a book about it. [Laughter] And the man said something to me that meant more to me than just about anything anybody could say. When I was walking out

of the diner he said, "Mr. President, I just want you to know that the whole time you were there, I felt like it was my house, too."

I want to say to all of you, as America grows more diverse, that will be more important. Claire Shulman and I were at a school in Queens the other day that was built for 400 and has about 800 children, predominantly Asian-American and Latino, the new children coming there, Chinese-American, Indian-American. And then tonight I showed up, and I looked out at all of you. Welcome to 21st century America.

On the way out of the Jackson Hole Diner today there were two guys sitting outside drinking a beer, and I stopped and shook hands with them, and they said hello to me. And I said, "Where are you from in Ireland?" [Laughter] And they said they were both from the same little village in County Clare. And I said, "Did you know each other as children?" They said, "Yes, but we didn't like each other until we came to America." [Laughter] And I thought, "Oh, if I could just hold that thought."

There is a lady back there with a sign that says Croatian-Americans support Hillary. And I thank you for that.

And I guess I would like to just start with that. There are four things I want you to know about this election, four reasons you ought to be for Al Gore and Joe Lieberman and Hillary and our side. And I'll start with what I usually leave for last.

We are committed, all of us, led by our candidate for President—the Vice President—to build one America across all the lines that divide us and to relate to the whole rest of the world, based on our values of peace and freedom and opportunity. We know that the world we're living in, the country we're living in, and whatever communities we're living in are growing increasingly more interdependent. And I am very grateful that we've had the chance, for example, to stand against ethnic cleansing in the Balkans, to stop the war in Bosnia and stop the ethnic cleansing in Kosovo and stand with our embargo until Mr. Milosevic finally could be dislodged by the people of Serbia in a Democratic, true uprising of popular feeling.

And I want you to know that Al Gore and Joe Lieberman and Hillary supported everything we ever did there. I don't know how many times Hillary went to the Balkans, not just with me but on her own, to support our troops, to meet

with women who were struggling to get the Croats and the Muslims and the Serbs together, across the ethnic and religious lines that divided them.

There were a lot of people that came through the line where I just was shaking hands a few moments ago, had Irish accents. And these two Irish guys asked me today, said, "Well, where is your family from?" And I said, "Well, we're from the wrong side of the line. We were from Roslea, County Fermanagh. But my oldest known homestead is right on the borderline of the Irish Republic and Northern Ireland." And this guy says, "So that's why you got involved?" [Laughter] I said, "Well, it was a reason."

No administration had ever tried to play a constructive role in resolving the difficulties in Northern Ireland before, for fear of interrupting our special relationship with Great Britain. I finally concluded that Great Britain would be better off with a minor interruption where, over the long run, they had a long-term settlement in Northern Ireland that was consistent with the interests of the people of the United States.

And I'm very, very grateful that Tony Blair and, before him, his predecessor, John Major, came to accept that and welcome our involvement. And I'm grateful for the work we've done. We're not out of the woods yet in the Irish peace process. There is still some work to be done to get the police force right and to get the decommissioning finished. But it's a lot, lot different than it was 8 years ago, and for that I'm grateful. And again, as Tom Manton said, Hillary went there a lot on her own, not just with me, to work with women who were committed to reaching across the lines of division there and putting their children first and finding ways to grow a grassroots economy and to relate to one another.

And of course, now, we're most concerned again about the recent tragic events in the Middle East. I promised myself when I ran for President that I would always be a friend of Israel, that the only way I could ever see that Israel could be secure in the long run would be to reach a fair, just, and lasting peace with its neighbors. And I had the great good fortune in the beginning of my term to work with Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, one of the greatest human beings I ever met in my life. And we have made so much progress.

And I end with Israel for a couple of reasons. First of all, because here again not only have

I spent more time on that, I suppose, than any other part of the world, but Hillary has gone there a lot on her own, without me, at the request of Mrs. Barak and others, to just try to keep pushing things forward. We've done everything we know to do.

But this is a cautionary reminder to all of us here in America. Look around the room at how quickly people who have even worked together for years can give into their fears and their misunderstandings and what turns out to be one bad day, turns out to be one bad week, turns out to be 2 bad weeks. And then all these unintended consequences flow.

The commitment of the United States to the security of Israel is as strong or stronger than it has ever been. But we shall also keep trying to stop the killing and to give them a chance to work their way back to the peace table.

And that brings me finally to something my wife said last night that, I must say, I identified with. She was talking about the memorial service we attended for the 14 young American sailors, men and women, who were killed on the United States Ship *Cole*, by terrorists in Yemen, at the port of Aden.

Those are the toughest days I ever spent as President, in 8 years, by far—much worse than any political setback or anything else—going into room after room after room, seeing the parents of people, most of whom are less than half my age, or their wives or their children, people who had died serving the United States—the *Cole*, Khobar Towers in Saudi Arabia, our two Embassies in Africa, on Ron Brown's plane, and in other cases. It is unbelievable.

But I never went through one of those days without being profoundly grateful for these kids who get up every day and put the uniform of our country on and serve and do the best they can to represent us stunningly well, and have prevented more wars than you, even I, will ever know, and saved us more headaches just by going out there and putting themselves on the line every day than we will ever know.

And one of the things that is so moving is, if you look at our Armed Forces today, they all look like this room. They're from every different racial and religious and ethnic group, and they work together. And just sending them somewhere around the world is a profound statement about what we Americans believe about how people should celebrate their diver-

sity but affirm the primary importance of our common humanity.

And that means, to me, two things. Number one, as Hillary said last night, we've all got to vote. The least we can do for those kids is vote. If they can put their uniform on and risk their lives, and sometimes give their lives, the least we can do is show up and be good citizens. Number two, we have to remember the lesson of who they are and how they worked together, as we stand for peace around the world and we work for one America here at home.

So I'll get back to the main point here. This is an increasingly interdependent world. The more we believe that everybody counts, everybody deserves a chance, and we all do better when we help each other, the better we're going to do. The more we celebrate and find excitement in the differences among us but constantly reaffirm our common humanity, the better we're going to do.

For the Democrats, that means significant differences in approach, very often, from our friends in the other party. We're for strong hate crimes legislation that protects people without regard to race, age, gender, disability, or sexual orientation. We're for it, and they're not. We're for that. We are for stronger enforcement of the equal pay laws, because we don't think it's right for women to do the same work as men and not get equal pay for it. We believe that. We believe that we've got to go forward together. That's the first thing I want to say. And it's a big issue for the 21st century.

The second point I want to make is, you ought to be for Al Gore, Joe Lieberman, and Hillary if you want to keep this prosperity going. Just remember what it was like 8 years ago. You know, it may be hard to remember what it was like, but I do. That's how I got elected. The people of New York were very, very good to me in 1992, after making me run a gauntlet or two. [Laughter] That's just what you do—and I liked it, actually, once I realized what the deal was. [Laughter]

But we've come a long way. Now, our party has a plan: Give a tax cut that we can afford, concentrated on the main needs of middle class people to send their children to college; have long-term care for their elderly and disabled family members; have help for child care, help for retirement savings; give extra incentives to invest in poor urban neighborhoods and rural areas that have been left behind; but have a

tax cut we can afford so we've got some money left over to invest in education, health care, the environment, and pay down the debt.

Now, you heard Tom talking about how we've turned the deficit to surplus. Why should the Democratic Party be for paying down the debt? Here's why. Because every day a trillion dollars cross national borders—every single day. Interest rates are set based on how responsible you are and how much money you need. The less money the Government takes, the more money is there for you, the American people, at lower prices.

So if we keep paying down the debt, we'll keep interest rates low. Our plan, on the whole, would make interest rates about a percent lower every year for a decade. Do you know what that's worth to you? Just listen: \$390 billion in lower home mortgages; \$30 billion in lower car payments; \$15 billion in lower college loan payments; lower credit card payments; lower business loans, which means more new businesses, more new jobs and a higher stock market. That's what that means.

So number one, we're the party of one America. Number two, we're the party that will keep this prosperity going. Number three, we're the party that will build on the progress of the last 8 years in every other area. The crime rate is at a 26-year low. The welfare rolls are at a 30-year low. The environment is cleaner. We've got the number of people without health insurance going down for the first time in a dozen years. So you have to ask people, "Look, all this stuff is going in the right direction. Do you want to build on it, or do you want to reverse policy?"

And finally, you ought to ask people, what about the future? Which candidates are more likely to figure out how to close the digital divide so that every kid has access to the Internet? Which party and which candidates are more likely to understand the implications of this biological revolution with the human genome? The young women in this audience today, within just a few years, when they enter their childbearing years, the young girls here, they'll be bringing home babies with a life expectancy of 90 years. That's the good news.

But all of your medical and all your financial information is going to be on somebody's computer. Who is most likely to understand how to protect your privacy and make the most of the Internet and the biological revolution? These

are big questions. This is a serious time we're moving into.

Now, look, I've done everything I could do to turn this country around, pull it together, and move it forward. But in America, our public life is always about tomorrow—always. And I can tell you, you need to go out and ask people which party and which candidates will stick up for one America and give us all a chance? Which party, which candidates will keep the prosperity going? Which party, which candidates will keep the progress going in crime, in the environment, in welfare, in health care, and in education? And which party and which candidates most nearly understand the future?

If you can just remember to make those four points, it's going to be fine. And I just want to tell you, don't forget that Vice President Gore has been at the center of every major positive decision made in the last 8 years by this administration. He broke the tie on the economic plan when nobody in the other party would vote for it. It turned this country around and got the economy booming. He led our efforts to reduce the size of Government but increase its effectiveness. We've got the smallest Government since 1960, doing more good for more people.

He led our efforts to get the so-called E-rate passed about 4 years ago, which guarantees a discount to poor schools, so that every school in this country can get hooked up to the Internet. When we started this project, 14 percent of our schools were connected to the Internet in 1994. Today, 95 percent are, thanks in large measure to the efforts of Al Gore. So I'll just tell you that.

Everybody in New England and the Northeast is worried about home heating oil, the energy shortage this summer. Let me just tell you, it was a piece of good news 3 or 4 days ago; General Motors announced that they had developed a car that gets 80 miles to the gallon. Did you see it? That's what they announced. And they gave credit to a project most of you probably never heard of, called the Partnership for the Next Generation Vehicles.

They said, "We were able to do this because we were involved in this partnership." We started that partnership with Detroit and the United Auto Workers in 1993, and who ran it for 7½ years? Al Gore. Listen, we need somebody like that in the White House, who will make good decisions, who understands the future, who can do what needs to be done.

Now, let me say a few words about Hillary. [Laughter] I mean, I am a completely unbiased source. [Laughter] You can bank this. I may be biased, but I know more about this than anybody else.

I met Hillary almost 30 years ago. When I met her, she had already been involved for some time in her lifetime obsession with children and families, with education, with health care, with child care, with all aspects of early childhood development. She spent an extra year when we were in law school just so she could study child development at the Yale Child Study Center and the Yale University Hospital. She stayed an extra year, so she wanted to know for sure when she got out of law school she would understand the impact of every legal and public policy decision on the children of this country.

And for 30 years, until she started running for this office, she has worked tirelessly as a citizen advocate, starting organizations, heading up others, working for other candidates. She never asked anybody to do anything for her in 30 years, except to join her in common cause, until she started running for the United States Senate from New York. And I thought it would be the hardest thing in the world for her to go out, ask you to vote for her, ask you to contribute to her campaign. And it turned out, in the beginning, it was kind of hard. She said, "I never did this for myself before." But she has worked for 30 years on things that you need someone to work on for New York in Washington.

For the last 8 years as First Lady, she has worked on a lot of things that had a direct, positive impact on the people of New York. She spoke out, as soon as we took office, for the family and medical leave law. It was the first bill I signed. Over 20 million Americans have taken advantage of family and medical leave when a baby was born or a parent was sick, to take some time off without losing their jobs. It's one of the best things we ever did in these whole 8 years.

She brought people to the White House from all over the country to help us make policy on children's health, on early childhood development and what happens to kids' brains, what kind of things we should do more of. We got 90 percent of our kids immunized against serious childhood illnesses for the first time in history. She worked on that.

She worked on the bill that allows people to keep their health insurance when they change jobs or when somebody in their family gets sick. She was an advocate for our Children's Health Insurance Program, which has now in the last couple of years brought health insurance to 2.5 million children in lower income working families and finally—finally—after a dozen years, got the number of uninsured kids going down in America, going in the right direction.

And when we decided to celebrate the millennium, she came up with this idea that we ought to find a way to celebrate the turning of the century and the turning of the millennium by thinking about the future but honoring the past. And her Millennium Treasures Project is the largest single historic preservation movement in the history of the country. It has put \$100 million, in public and private money, in it now. And a lot of the places preserved are right here in New York State, in places that need it economically, for tourism, for community pride: George Washington's revolutionary headquarters, Harriet Tubman's home, parts of the Underground Railroad—had a direct positive impact. It's the biggest thing of its kind in the history of the country. It came right out of her head. She thought about it.

What's the point of all this? In 30 years, I have known hundreds, thousands of people in public life. And I want to tell you, most people who do this work are better than they get credit for most days—Republicans as well as Democrats. I'll even say that 2 weeks from election. Most people I've known in public life are honest, worked hard, and did what they thought was right. But I have never known anybody in 30 years that had the strong combination Hillary does of brains and heart and determination and imagination and ability to get things done and work with all different kinds of people. She will be a worthy successor to the great Daniel Patrick Moynihan, to Robert Kennedy, and a great partner for Chuck Schumer, if you will just make sure she wins on November 7th.

Ladies and gentlemen, the next Senator from New York.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:15 p.m. in the Electrical Industry Auditorium at the Union Hall. In his remarks, he referred to former Representative Thomas J. Manton, chair, and Michael H. Reich, executive secretary, Queens County Democratic Organization; Mr. Reich's daughter,

Alisa, who sang the national anthem; Representative Crowley's wife, Kasey; New York City Comptroller Alan G. Hevesi; State Assemblyman Brian McLaughlin; former President Slobodan Milosevic of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia

(Serbia and Montenegro); Prime Minister Tony Blair and former Prime Minister John Major of the United Kingdom; and Nava Barak, wife of Prime Minister Ehud Barak of Israel.

## Remarks at a Westchester County Democratic Party Dinner in New Rochelle, New York October 23, 2000

Thank you. Thanks. *[Laughter]* Thank you for the wonderful welcome. Thank you for being here in such large numbers. Thank you for making David Alpert look good tonight at the Westchester County Democratic dinner. *[Laughter]* Thank you, Dennis Mehiel, for your friendship and your support. I want to thank my great friend John Catsimatidis for helping you at this dinner, and Anthony Pagano and everyone else who had anything to do with the dinner.

I want to thank the county executive, Andy Spano, for being such a good friend to Hillary and to me and making me feel welcome here in Westchester County. Our great comptroller, Carl McCall, we welcome him tonight. And I want to thank the two people here who, next to Hillary, are most responsible for making me look good over the last 8 years, Representatives Eliot Engel and Nita Lowey. Thank you very much for all you have done, wherever they are.

Now, let me say to all of you, I want you to have most of the time to listen to Hillary and to think about this Senate race, but I want to say just a few things about how the race for the Senate in New York relates to the larger national campaign, which will also unfold 2 weeks from tomorrow. I want to begin by thanking you all from the bottom of my heart for the phenomenal support that the people of New York have given to me and Al Gore in 1992 and then in 1996. I am very grateful.

I would just say, to me there are basically three or four questions that are really important. I think they matter in the Senate race. I think they matter in the race for President and Vice President. And I hope you will share them with friends of yours who not only live in New York but live in other States, because every one of you has tons of friends or family members, co-workers, some of whom live in New York, some

of whom don't even live in this State, who will never come to a dinner like this. Isn't that right?

When you come to a dinner like this, don't you have some people say, "Why do you spend your time and money doing that?" *[Laughter]* You do, don't you? Everyone one of you do, right? But all these people that sometimes make fun of you, sometimes want to know why you're doing this, virtually all of them are going to vote 2 weeks from tomorrow, or they would if they knew exactly what was at stake.

So while we're all having a good time tonight, and the temptation is just for me to hit you with a bunch of one-liners that make you want to scream with joy—*[laughter]*—the truth is, what we should be focused on is, how do we get people who don't come to dinners like this, who aren't as political as we are but who love our country very much and will definitely show up at election time, to understand this election in the way that we understand it?

I told the Democratic Congress and the Senate the other day that we ought to think of ourselves as America's weather corps, that if we can make the choices clear, our side wins. If the choices can be blurred and remain cloudy, we have a lot more trouble. So over the next 2 weeks, this is what I could say, if I could personally speak to all your family and friends: Here's why you ought to be for Al Gore, Joe Lieberman, and Hillary.

Number one, we've had the longest economic expansion in history, the lowest unemployment in 30 years, the highest homeownership in history, the lowest minority unemployment ever recorded. And it's really important to keep this prosperity going, especially if you want to extend it to the inner-city neighborhoods in New York and the rural counties in New York that still haven't fully participated. You will never be able